AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please revise the paragraph at lines 15-21 on page 7, as follows:

Thereafter, nitridation of W-Si occurs at about 750^{0}C for about 30 min. with NH_3. Active NH_2, NH, species react with W-Si to form W-Si-N. This passivation layer has the structure of W-Si-N (e.g., see attached Auger Profile analysis results in Figure 5), and is effective in preventing W from being oxidized in the subsequent processing steps (e.g., see associated patent disclosure of "Method ~~to Protect~~ for Protecting Refractory Metal Thin ~~Films~~ Film Requiring High Temperature Processing in an Oxidizing Atmosphere and Structure Formed Thereby" (U.S. Patent application No. 09/337,550, having IBM Disclosure No. YOR8-1998-0774, currently U.S. Patent No. 6,238,737, issued May 29, 2001, incorporated herein by reference).